

The Two Types of People

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â€• Nicole Krauss, The History of Love One-shot Hiccstrid

The Two Types of People

"_There are two types of people in the world: those who prefer to be sad among others, and those who prefer to be sad alone."_

Nicole Krauss, _The History of Love_

It had been a sad day. The entire village had gathered for a public remembrance for the fallen chief, his father, Stoick the Vast. Hiccup had been bombarded with apologies and embraces after it had ended. The village as a whole was in mourning, and Hiccup showed strength enough to comfort everyone he spoke. He embraced, he thanked, he prayed to mighty Thor for the safe journey of the fallen chief through Odin's great battlefield. By sundown, Hiccup was beginning to feel exhausted. The entire day he had stood tall and strong and been a beacon of strength to his people. But for now, all he wanted was to be alone for a while.

"Babe?"

A soft voice to his left. He turned his gaze towards the voice. Astrid. Beside her was Toothless. He warbled quietly, his green eyes large with concern. Hiccup laid a reassuring hand on his friend's snout, offering a smile.

"Hey Bud". He lifted his gaze to the face of his fiancÃ©. He offered her a similar smile. "What's up". His voice was strong and his face was calm, but Astrid could see beneath it. She reached out with a gentle hand to wrap her finders around his upper arm. She gave it a gentle squeeze.

"Let's go".

With a nod, Hiccup bid goodnight to the remaining villagers and followed Astrid away from the town centre, a polite smile still in place. As the distance between them and the villagers grew further, Hiccup's smile faltered. For the second time, reality was beginning to sink in as he approached his home. He hadn't realized Astrid was leading him there. He hadn't been home since returning to Berk. The last few days he'd spent with his mother, Valka, at Gobber's home.

It wasn't a conscious decision that had kept him away from his home. It had just eventuated that way. Naturally, he and his mother had spent a long time at Gobber's, talking and reminiscing over what Valka had missed in her 20 year absence. The nights had grown late and it had been the easiest option to stay the night. Hiccup didn't consider it avoidance. Until now.

"Astrid â€" wait". The blonde viking halted, turning a concerned face towards him. Toothless turned also, his eyes large in the dim evening light. The pair gazed at him in silence, and Hiccup swallowed hard. Astrid gave a weak smile and held his hand. She gave a squeeze.

"It's ok, Hiccup. We're here for you". Toothless edged forward, nudging their hands with his nose and cooing softly in agreement. A lump formed in Hiccup's throat and his eyes pricked. He bit the inside of his cheek hard enough to draw blood.

"I- just â€" I think you should go home Astrid" Hiccup said, avoiding eye contact with her, "It's getting late"

"I can come inside with you" she offered "If you want-"

"Thanks" Hiccup cut her off "But I'm fine". Her gaze dropped to the ground. Hiccup felt his heart tug, and gave her hand a squeeze back "Really Astrid" he whispered, lifting her chin with two fingers "I'll be fine. Promise".

The beautiful blonde gazed into his eyes for a moment, searching for â€" something. Then, with a hint of a sigh, followed by another weak smile, she kissed him. A soft, quick kiss.

"I'll see you first thing?" a question.

"Wouldn't miss it". With one last squeeze of his hand, Astrid walked past Hiccup and his dragon, down the hill towards town.

The house was cold. The night chill had seeped through its walls and taken up residence in their absence. Toothless, with a quick spit, ignited the flame in the living room. It took the edge off the bitter cold in minutes.

Hiccup stood by the doorway, peering around at the room. It felt foreign after a few short days away. His breath hitched. Hiccup felt himself move a few paces into the room. His metal foot clunked on the floor softly in the silence. Toothless warbled softly beside the chair near the stairs. His head lay on the arm rest, his eyes half closed in sadness. He met Hiccup's gaze.

"It's ok, Bud" Hiccup rushed to Toothless' side, rubbing his head comfortingly. Toothless gave a great sigh and closed his eyes. Hiccup felt the lump forming again in his throat. His gaze slipped to the empty chair where his father used to sit. It was empty and cold. He sat down in front of it and ran his fingertips across wood, worn from years of use.

Like an almighty wave, grief and distress engulfed him, and the sadness, which Hiccup had been ignoring for days, penetrated the wall that had been built up. Great sobs wracked his body.

"Dad" he sobbed, "I'm â€" I'm not ready yet-"

There was a bang of an opening door, accompanied by a freezing gust of wind, and Hiccup was pulled into a strong embrace from behind. Without looking, he turned his face into the shoulder and cried loudly. His shoulders shook and his fingers clenched at the strong arms that held him. A soft hand touched his hair.

"It's ok, Babe" Astrid's cracked voice broke through his sobs "I'm here"

"Astrid" he sobbed. She shushed him and held him tighter. Toothless cooed sadly from behind the pair and moved to curl his body around the two. His head came to rest on Hiccup's lap and he nuzzled him. For what felt like hours, the three sat in that position. Unmoving. Unwilling to let go. Then, after the storm had eased, Astrid spoke.

"Hiccup â€" I wish there was something I could do.. or something I could say-"

"It's ok, Astrid" Hiccup sat up straight, looking his fiancÃ© in the eye and pushing back her bangs, "I just wish you hadn't had to see that"

"Hiccup, no" Astrid held his face in her hands, kissing him softly "I wish you didn't feel the need to hide this from meâ€" I'm .. I'm here for you, y'know?"

"I know" Hiccup replied "I just â€" I don't like being sad in front of others. There's so much sadness todayâ€" what we needed was strength"

"We all love you Hiccup" Astrid assured him, "We understand that you're going to be sad. It's not weakness to be sad. It makes you human"

"The village needs a chief who can be strong in dark times Astrid" Astrid pushed back his hair, locking her gaze with his.

"Hiccup," she said sternly "What the village needs is you. Exactly how you are. There are times to be strong, and there are times where the village needs to grieve _as a village_. That includes _you_. _Especially you!"

She held him close, her forehead resting on his. Hiccup wiped at his eyes and gave Astrid a weak smile.

"Astrid?"

"Yeah?"

"Will â€" will you stay with me? With us?" Toothless' head lifted at the word, unsure of what it meant, but sure it had something to do with him. Astrid patted him soothingly and he relaxed.

"I'm always here for you Hiccup" she replied, kissing his nose again, "Of course I will"

"Thanks" Hiccup sighed, "Astrid?"

"Yeah, babe?"

"Thankyou â€" for everything". He kissed her. And she kissed him back. Pulling him to his feet, Astrid helped him up the stairs to his bed, with Toothless in tow. The pair laid down in an embrace, with Toothless curled up beside the bed, wide awake, while the couple drifted off into a slumber. He didn't understand everything that had occurred tonight, but one thing he knewâ€|

he would protect his rider - and his mate - tonight.

End
file.